

# The Gift of Service

The residual British tea-gene is a deeply important element of my social and behavioral composition. In fact, research suggests that many teas are invigorating, health giving, anti-oxidizing, and therapeutic.

The real genius behind tea resides in its redemptive characteristics. Tea is all about the preparation, the time invested, the intention, and – most importantly – the act of service.

Let me explain.

**The teapot is my favorite gift to give as a wedding present, and the instructions I sometimes enclose look a lot like this:**

Please read before preparing tea. Life is inherently difficult. As beings made in the image of God, our design encourages us to live with creative purpose. Each challenge we face is an opportunity to engage the intention of creation, and to live on the cutting edge of possibility. Marriage is loaded with such opportunity. Tea can help here.

Love is never about winning, it is always about healing, and the best relationships nurture one another. As men, especially, our primary responsibility is to love our wives; love means nurture, nurture means service, and service means tea.

Preparing and serving a hot cup of tea is a selfless and redemptive act of practical love. Here's how it works:

Imagine you are in trouble with your spouse – it shouldn't be hard!

Say, "Let's have a cup of tea." This is code for "I want to sit down with you, and serve you; I want to be with you and to share something meaningful."

It takes time to boil water (the microwave does not make good tea); it takes time to properly warm the pot before pouring the boiling water over the leaves; it takes time to pour the tea into china cups and to select the appropriate cookie or cracker.

When you sit down with your spouse, then, you bring a good ten minutes of preparation and positive intention to the act of loving service; the opportunity for healing dialogue is set.

Offering tea declares, "I love you enough to serve you; to prepare something with the entire civilizing weight of British history behind it; to spend ten minutes – knee to knee – sipping something good and looking into your eyes." It says, "I want this relationship to work."

I have made tea for Rebekah as late as one o'clock in the morning. Neither one of us was looking for a hot drink, but we certainly needed the ritual.

There is a lot to be said for the civilizing ethic of mutual service, of engaging life with a servant's heart regarding all of our relationships.

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Make your wife a cup of hot tea. Start the year out right.

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